Shortage of professionals in Health Sector

3482. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is acute shortage of professionals in the health sector in the country and our country is short of 6 lakh doctors, 10 lakh nurses and 10 lakh dental surgeons as per a Planning Commission Report;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether doctor-patient ratio in our country is very low as there is one doctor for every 10,000 Indians while the developed countries like US has 548:1, Australia 249:1, Canada 209:1 and UK 166:1; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (d) There is no shortage in the aggregate number of doctors and nurses in the country. As per information furnished by Medical Council of India, the total number of registered Allopathic doctors in the country is 7,20,580. Thus, the allopathic doctor-population works out to 1:1634. In addition, there are more than 6 lakhs practitioners of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy in the country. Taking all these numbers together, the doctor-population ratio comes to 1:870. There are 271 medical colleges in the country with annual intake of 31,172 who add up to the existing medical manpower. The National Rural Helath Mission has been operationalised with the main aim of providing accessible and reliable primary health care facilities especially to the poor and the vulnerable sections of the population.

Cost to make ordinary salt iodized

†3483. SHRI ALI ANWAR ANSARI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that it costs ten paise to twenty paise per kilogram to make the ordinary salt iodized;

(b) whether it is a fact that ordinary salt was available at the rate of one to two rupees per kilogram in open market before a ban was put on by Government on consumption of ordinary salt by human beings;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there has been steep rise in the prices of iodized salt during last three years; and

(d) the extent to which market for ordinary salt and iodized salt has expanded in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (d) As the cost of iodization is approximately 10 paisa per kilogram only even today for the same variety, quality and packaging, the difference in cost of iodized salt and non-iodized salt is marginal and thus its percentage contribution to retail price is negligible. Further, the average consumption of iodized salt per person/day is about 10 grams which is a year would be about 4 kg of salt. The production of iodated salt was about 52 lakh MT in 2006-07. The iodated salt market for edible purpose has expanded over 90% in the country.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.